

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI GR US MARR

SUBJ: AMMUNITION SHORTAGES AT SOUDA BAY

REF SECTO 8088

FOR THE SECRETARY

1. I SPOKE WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF SATURDAY SHORTLY AFTER HE HAD RECEIVED A REPORT FROM BITSIOS CONCERNING BITSIOS' DISCUSSION WITH YOU IN HELSINKI ABOUT THE AMMUNITION SHORTAGES AT SOUDA BAY. BITSIOS HAD TOLD AVEROFF THAT YOU SAW SEVERAL VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SHORTAGES BUT THAT YOU AGREED TO REVIEW THE ENTIRE MATTER PERSONALLY AND BE AS HELPFUL AS YOU COULD UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. ACCORDING TO AVEROFF, YOU HAD TOLD BITSIOS IN HELSINKI THAT THE GREEKS NEED NOT TAKE ANY ACTION ON THIS MATTER UNTIL THEY HEARD FROM YOU FURTHER. AVEROFF ASKED ME TO PASS TO YOU PERSONALLY HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR YOUR PERSONAL INTEREST AND DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL.

2. I ALSO SAW BITSIOS EARLY THIS AFTERNOON HERE IN ATHENS AND HE RELATED SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME INFORMATION TO ME. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO BRIEFED

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CARAMANLIS ON THIS SUBJECT AND THAT HE AND CARAMANLIS

BOTH WANTED YOU TO KNOW PERSONALLY HOW MUCH THEY APPRECIATED YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND REACTION. BITSIOS SAID THAT AS FAR AS THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED THE "MISAPPROPRIATION" OF THE AMMUNITION WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE "JUNTA" BUT THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO SET THE MATTER RIGHT IMMEDIATELY. THE ONLY QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE AMMUNITION WOULD HAVE TO BE RETURNED IN EVERY CASE OR WHETHER THE GOG COULD PURCHASE IT-- WHICH THEY VERY, VERY MUCH WANT TO DO -- FOR CASH OR, PREFERABLY, FMS CREDITS. BITSIOS SAID TO TELL YOU THAT HE HAD BEEN INFORMED SINCE HIS RETURN TO ATHENS THAT THE AMOUNT INVOLVED WAS RELATIVELY SMALL -- NOT 30 OR 40 MILLION DOLLARS BUT PROBABLY 4 - 5 MILLION DOLLARS OR EVEN LESS. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE, CARAMANLIS AND AVEROFF HOPED VERY MUCH YOU WOULD NOT FIND IT NECESSARY TO FORCE THE RETURN OF THE AMMUNITION.

3. COMMENT. I, OF COURSE, AM NOT AWARE OF ALL OF THE CONSIDERATIONS YOU MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, BUT IN TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT AND THE GREEK MILITARY -- AND YOUR OWN PERSONAL CREDIT WITH THE TOPMOST PEOPLE HERE -- I RECOMMEND THAT YOU ALLOW THE GREEKS TO BUY THE AMMUNITION, IF POSSIBLE ON CREDIT. IF YOU FEEL THAT THEY MUST RETURN AT LEAST SOME OF THE AMMUNITION, EITHER FOR SYMBOLIC PURPOSES OR BECAUSE OF OUR OWN NEEDS, A POSSIBLE FALLBACK WOULD BE TO ALLOW THEM TO PURCHASE A PORTION, BUT NOT ALL OF THE AMMUNITION. KUBISCH

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